



# Conflict Resolution: Steps for Handling Interpersonal Dynamics

## Overview:

This workshop engages participants in addressing conflicts that are typical for their work/situation through talking through them, using a series of eight simple steps. By presenting a strategy for addressing conflicts, participants learn that there are ways to address and resolve conflicts through better communication. They can apply these steps to conflicts (real or through case studies) that they are facing personally.

## Category:

People and project management; leadership skills; conflict resolution

## Level:

Introductory

## Recommended

### Bonner Sequence:

This workshop is most appropriate for use during freshman or sophomore year. It supports the developmental intentions of communication skills and conflict resolution, common in the first two years.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise
VALUES: community building				

## Type:

Structured activities suitable for workshop (e.g. retreat or training)

## Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- Participants engage in communication activities that surface issues involved with communication or conflict
- Participants identify typical conflicts that happen in the program/context.
- Participants role play ways of communicating to address conflicts

## Materials:

- Flip chart and markers
- Copies of included handouts

## How to Prepare:

Review the trainer guide. Prepare handouts.

Review and modify scenarios to fit purpose and activities of participants.

## How to Do/Brief Outline:

This 90-minute workshop is built around highly interactive elements. The components include:

1) Opening and Review	suggested time 10 minutes
2) Conflict Resolution Strategy Brainstorm	suggested time 15 minutes
3) Conflict Resolution Steps	suggested time 10 minutes
4) The Wind Blows Exercise	suggested time 10 minutes
5) Conflict Resolution Murals	suggested time 20minutes
6) Mural Sharing	suggested time 15 minutes
7) Debrief and Wrap	suggested time 10 minutes

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## Part 1) Opening and Review

Suggested time 10 minutes

[This workshop can follow the Conflict Resolution 101 workshop directly or after some break of time/days.]

Introduce self and review the goals and agenda for the session. Review the Conflict 101 workshop.

Have people get into pairs and answer the following questions:

- What is a conflict?
- What conflicts have happened related to your service/program experience?

Ask a few people to share their answers with the whole group when back in a circle.

## Part 2) Conflict Resolution Strategy Brainstorm

Suggested time 15 minutes

Using the scenarios raised in the pairs' report backs, lead the group in a brainstorm on flipchart paper of some possible ways to "resolve" or end the cited conflicts.

Encourage all types of responses, which may include: talking it out, physical fighting; arguing; ignoring the problem, forced resolution etc...

After you have created the list ask several participants to share an anecdote or story about when they have used one of these ways/techniques to deal with a conflict. *What worked about their method? What wasn't so effective about their method?*

Finally, ask the group to define "Conflict Resolution". Write their brainstorm answers up on flipchart.

### **Part 3) Conflict Resolution Steps**

Suggested time 10 minutes

Review the actual definition on the handout and the eight steps for addressing a conflict:

*Conflict: a mental and/or physical disagreement in which people's values or needs are in opposition to each or they think that they are opposed*

1. Identify positions ("what are they saying") of each side of the people in conflict.
2. Learn more about the true needs and desires behind each side.
3. Ask clarifying questions for more information.
4. Brainstorm possible solutions.
5. Discuss how each solution would affect each side and figure out possible compromises.
6. Agree upon a solution.
7. Implement solutions.
8. Re-evaluate solutions, if necessary.

You can consider using a sample mural, like the one you will ask participants to create in step five, to present each of the steps. Walk in order from step to step, (each step is one piece of the mural) explaining each step of the resolution process.

Ask for examples from the participants' lives when you get to each of the 8 steps.

### **Part 4) The Wind Blows Exercise**

Suggested time 10 minutes

Use this exercise to recap the steps for conflict resolution.

Play a few questions of “Which Way the Wind Blows.” People should sit in a circle with one less chair than is needed for the group (because one is standing in the center). The facilitator will say a statement. If that statement applies to people, they must get up and walk quickly (not run) to another chair, excluding the one directly on right or left of the one they left.

Ask people not to use statements/questions related to physical appearance, but instead to ask questions that will give us the chance to learn something new about people in the group (i.e., Who has ever gone to a family reunion?).

After two rounds, the person left standing will select one topic from flip-chart list below and practice speaking in public for 20 seconds about selected topics. Topics should include:

- Describe a recent conflict you witnessed or were a part of.
- Describe a conflict that was not resolved that you were a part of or knew about.
- Definition of conflict.
- Definition of conflict resolution
- Name a Step to Conflict Resolution and describe it
- Name another Step to Conflict Resolution and describe it
- Name another Step to Conflict Resolution and describe it

## **Part 5) Conflict Resolution Murals**

Suggested time 20 minutes

Ask participants to think of a personal conflict they are having.

Then ask participants to try working through the eight steps. Have them go through the resolution process and try and resolve it using the eight steps.

If they can't think of one, here are some ideas to spark their own thoughts:

- Your best friend is flirting with the guy/girl he/she knows you like.
- Your brother/sister ruined the shirt you were going to wear out.
- You want more money and feel your parents don't give you enough allowance.
- You are accused of hurting someone on the bus on your way to school.

In groups of 3-4, have each person share their answer to the above question.

Ask participants to pick one scenario to draw a mural about that shows how a conflict can be resolved using the 8 step process.

Have each small group decorate a mural that reflects their scenario. The images on the mural don't have to be literal. The idea is to get them to creatively express their ideas through mural drawing. Whatever comes to mind to draw is ok, if it relates to the scenario that is chosen.

Have each group identify someone in the group to explain their mural to the whole group, as a reporter.

### **Part 6) Mural Sharing**

Suggested time 15 minutes

Do a Gallery Walk to see all of the participants' murals.

Have each individual/group present for no more than 2 minutes.

After each presentation, you can have each group reflect on their application of the steps, stating what they did well and what they had a hard time with.

### **Part 7) Discussion and Wrap Up**

Suggested time 10 minutes

End with some time for general discussion. You can use the following questions:

- What did you learn about conflict resolution today that you didn't know before?
- How will I use this information that I learned today and apply it in my own life?
- What was a highlight of the day and what are you looking forward to?
- What are you looking forward to?

Wrap with next steps and/or evaluation.

# **Eight Steps for Addressing Conflicts**

## **Definition:**

*Conflict: a mental and/or physical disagreement in which people's values or needs are in opposition to each other or they think that they are opposed*

## **Try using the following steps:**

1. Identify positions (“what are they saying”) of each side of the people in conflict.
2. Learn more about the true needs and desires behind each side.
3. Ask clarifying questions for more information.
4. Brainstorm possible solutions.
5. Discuss how each solution would affect each side and figure out possible compromises.
6. Agree upon a solution.
7. Implement solutions.
8. Re-evaluate solutions, if necessary.